From: Simmons, Denise
To: Gilead Ini
Subject: Re: BDS Resolution/Hewlett-Packard
Date: Tuesday, April 17, 2018 6:28:07 PM

Thank you for your email. So far, I have not yet seen an actual draft of the proposed resolution asking the City to cease purchasing HP equipment and supplies. I understand there's been a great deal of passionate discussion in the community about this matter – yet I must underscore that this will only appear on the City Council's April 23 agenda if one or more City Councilors sponsor it. We will not know if it is on the agenda until either a City Councilor publicly declares that they'll be sponsoring this (to my knowledge, this has not happened), or until the agenda is finalized by the Clerk's Office and posted online this Thursday evening around 5:30 pm. I can, at the very least, confirm that *I* am not a sponsor of such a resolution.

There have been numerous op-eds, emails, and social media posts condemning the City Council for rushing this to a vote without adequate opportunities for the public to weigh in, or even giving people a chance to read the resolution. Some people have condemned the City Council for seemingly being on the brink of passing this resolution, or for seemingly being on the brink of rejecting it. While I understand the passion behind this matter, I must clarify that we do not yet have a resolution or policy order in front of us, there has been absolutely no debate about this amongst the City Councilors, and the City Council will not have an opportunity to discuss this amongst ourselves unless and until a resolution is sponsored by at least one of us and introduced at a public meeting. At this point, I am not yet certain if such a resolution will be introduced or not.

I appreciate your reaching out and sharing your views on this. I am currently reading up on this issue to be better informed, I am reviewing all the emails and letters coming in about this issue, and I am reaching out to our representatives in Congress to seek their input on an issue that is more international than municipal in scope. Should this matter end up on before the City Council – either on April 23 or at a later date – I will look forward to engaging in a thoughtful discussion and debate with my colleagues on the Council and then seeing how to best resolve this matter in a way that allows everyone to feel they have had a fair chance to be heard. Thank you.

E. Denise Simmons

From: Gilead Ini <gilead1818@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 17, 2018 3:42 PM
To: Gilead Ini
Subject: BDS Resolution/Hewlett-Packard

Dear City Council Members,

I would have liked to address you during Monday's meeting, but since I'll be out of town, I hope you'll consider my brief thoughts on, and strong opposition to, Cambridge's proposed participation in the anti-Israel boycott movement.

For most of the past decade I lived on Trowbridge Street in Mid-Cambridge. And while I now live down the road in Medford, the proposed resolution targeting Hewlett-Packard and Israel still affects me as your neighbor, as a Jew, and as a first-generation American whose father immigrated to the U.S. after fleeing anti-Jewish persecution in Baghdad.

When I see Israel singled out like this — when I see the largest community and greatest concentration of Jews in the world singled out like this — I often think of how it felt for my father and his family when they were singled out for persecution by Iraqis who were too quick to notice fault with their Jewish neighbors, whose purported crime was living life no differently than the rest of the community. I think of how it might feel for a person of color on Trowbridge Street, or in Huron Village, or at a Starbucks in Central Square, if his neighbors rallied to punish, prosecute, or persecute him for alleged offenses, without scrutiny of the purported evidence, and for actions that when taken by white Cantabrigians go unnoticed. Such is the singling out of Israel for its attempts to protect its citizens — attempts that have unfortunately required military action to stop rocket fire, but that have also included intensive negotiations with and wide-ranging peace offers to Palestinian leaders.

Forty years ago, a letter about Israel was signed by Rosa Parks, Bayard Rustin, Coretta Scott King, A. Philip Randolph, Tom Bradley, Dorothy Height, Roy Wilkins, and many other other top icons of the civil rights movement. The letter's first point was that "We condemn the anti-Jewish 'blacklist,'" a reference to a boycott efforts by Mideast dictators targeting Israel and the Jews. "Having suffered so greatly from such prejudice, we consider most repugnant efforts by Arab states to use the economic power of their newly acquired oil wealth to boycott business firms that deal with Israel," they wrote.

Equally relevant was their forceful defense of Zionism and Israel's right to exist. "We support democratic Israel's right to exist. The democratic values that have sustained our struggle in America are also the source of our admiration for Israel and her impressive social achievements," they wrote. "No nation is without imperfections. But Israel's are far outweighed by the freedom of her democratic society." This passage is relevant is because, today, the BDS movement that calls for boycotting HP and Israel is open about its ultimate target: not Israeli policies; not Israel's conduct in past wars with Hamas; but rather, the right of the Jewish people to a homeland.

Don't take my word for it. Omar Barghouti, a founder of the BDS movement, has admitted that he seeks to replace Israel with "a unitary state, **where, by definition, Jews will be a minority.**" That goal of rendering Jews a minority is no more progressive than the desire of

some Americans who want to reverse time so that their black neighbors remain a powerless minority in U.S. cities.

So in urging you to reject the proposed resolution, I stand with Rosa Parks; I stand with Barak Obama, who firmly opposed anti-Zionism and, in February 2016, directed his administration "to strongly oppose boycotts, divestment campaigns, and sanctions targeting the State of Israel"; I stand with Deval Patrick, who lauded the beneficial economic relationships between Boston and Israel; I stand with Joe Kennedy, whose spokeswoman last year noted, "Congressman Kennedy firmly opposes the BDS movement which seeks to isolate and undermine one of our closest global allies"; and I stand with most Massachusetts residents who reject diverting city government resources to participate in a dishonest, unfair, and divisive campaign singling out one country, and one people.

With thanks,

Gilead Ini